WE CLAIM:

1. A system for transmitting and registering calls for assistance, including:

a plurality of call boxes, located at a plurality of positions where users may need to transmit calls for assistance, at least one of the call boxes including:

a frequency hopping spread spectrum transmitter for transmitting the calls for assistance;

an actuator on the call box, whereby a user can actuate the transmitter to transmit a call for assistance;

a voice message response device for providing a voice message from the call box to the user upon actuating the transmitter to transmit a call for assistance; and

a reset switch, whereby an associate can reset the call box after a user has transmitted a call for assistance;

a central processor for receiving the calls for assistance, and for transmitting paging messages, the central processor including:

a transceiver for providing transmission of the paging messages and for verifying that a channel is clear prior to transmission of the paging messages;

a receiver for receiving the calls for assistance;

a memory; and

a processor connected to the transceiver, receiver, and the memory, for detecting the calls for assistance received by the receiver, and causing the transceiver to transmit the paging messages; and

a plurality of portable radios capable of receiving the paging messages from the central processor, whereby an associate carrying one of the portable radios is notified of the call for assistance and the location where the call for assistance was sent, and may report to the location, assist the user, and reset the reset switch.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the call boxes are battery powered.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the actuator includes a push button.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein at least one call box includes a light indicator to indicate that the call for assistance has been transmitted.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor further includes an input/output device for inputting and outputting information regarding the system.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the input/output device is connected to a telephone line.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the voice message response device further verifies to the user that the call for assistance has been transmitted.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the voice message response device further instructs the user to remain at the call box until assistance arrives.

9. The system of claim 1 wherein the central processor further monitors the call boxes to determine whether they are operational.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the call boxes periodically transmit supervisory control messages to the central processor.

11. The system of claim 1 further including a wireless repeater for receiving the calls for assistance from the call boxes and for retransmitting the calls for assistance to the central processor.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the call boxes further includes a low battery alert function, whereby the call box alerts the controller when a battery in the call box is running low.

13. The system of claim 1, wherein the call boxes are positioned at locations of a store, and the users are customers of the store.

14. The system of claim 1, wherein the central processor further includes a speaker and a microphone.

15. A method for registering and transmitting calls for assistance from customers in a retail business facility having a plurality of departments, the method including:

providing a call box at a location in a department of the retail facility where customers may make calls for assistance by activating the call box;

transmitting a call for assistance from a customer with a frequency hopping spread spectrum transmitter;

communicating a first voice message from the call box to the customer, instructing the customer to stay at the location of the call box; and

receiving the call for assistance at a central processor and broadcasting a second voice message to at least one of a plurality of portable radios, wherein the second voice message identifies the department where the customer made the call for assistance.

16. The method of claim 15, further including the step of recording the first voice message in the call box.

17. The method of claim 15, further including the step of compiling the second voice message at the central processor prior to broadcasting.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of compiling the second voice message includes forming the second voice message by combining a plurality of separate voice recordings stored in the central processor.

19. The method of claim 15, further including the step of receiving the call for assistance at a wireless repeater prior to receiving the call for assistance at the central processor, and retransmitting the call for assistance to the central processor.

20. The method of claim 15, further including the step of transmitting a message to a pager.

21. The method of claim 15, further including the step of registering at the central processor a start time when the call for assistance was received, and a finish time when an associate resets the call for assistance.

22. The method of claim 21, further including the step of storing the start and finish times in a memory.

23. The method of claim 15, further including the step of automatically resetting the call box if the call box is not manually reset within a predetermined time.